

THE LATE MR. LOUDON.

THE death of Mr. Loudon, which took place on the 14th inst., is a great loss to science, as well as to his numerous circle of friends in private life. To a most amiable and benevolent disposition he joined an ardent love of the study of nature, more particularly of the vegetable kingdom, of which his *Encyclopædia* and his ably-conducted *Magazine* bear ample evidence. Mr. Loudon had a power of communicating his knowledge in writing, and a felicitous manner of explaining it to his friends, which will long endear his memory to an extensive circle of lovers of nature. His great talent and taste in laying out ornamental grounds is well known to the public, and the arrangement of some garden enclosures under the control of Government, where the name and classification of each plant is correctly inscribed and fixed in a convenient position, was, we believe, originally the suggestion of Mr. Loudon. Great credit is due to the present Government for the manner in which that plan is now carried out. During a walk in St. James's park the poorest of Her Majesty's subjects may whilst enjoying the pleasure of healthful exercise, gather knowledge which in former times could be procured only with difficulty, and at an expense far beyond the reach of the more humble admirers of nature. Mr. Loudon died of a pulmonary complaint, accelerated by his assiduous mental exertion. It may indeed be said that he has sacrificed his existence to an anxious and unremitting application to study, which benefited his fellow-creatures, whilst, unfortunately, it was productive of hot little advantage to himself. Mr. Loudon has left a widow and a daughter, the latter still in childhood.

It was but a very few weeks previous to his decease, that Mr. Loudon felt himself compelled to make an appeal to the public to relieve him in some degree from embarrassments—from this appeal we make the following extract:—

"This appeal would never have been made, had not Mr. Loudon, who has been an invalid for several years, been lately seized with an inflammation of the lungs, terminating in chronic bronchitis, which, even if the disease should be considerably alleviated, will effectually prevent him from any longer pursuing his profession of landscape gardener, on the produce of which profession, and on the literary labours of Mrs. Loudon, he has entirely depended for his income, since his literary property was pledged for the 'Arboretum.' Under these circumstances, Mr. Loudon feels himself justified in taking this mode of soliciting additional subscribers to the 'Arboretum,' and in begging his friends and patrons throughout the country to assist him in obtaining them."

All this is so like the candour and the truth-loving bias of our deceased friend; it was so in all our intercourse with him, and so much so as would have exposed him, in the eye of the man of ordinary worldly craft, to the charge of being indiscreet in the avowal of his circumstances. "Pledged for the 'Arboretum.'" Yes, this was the language which he held to us some twelve months ago. It will be in the recollection of our readers that we were indebted to Mr. Loudon for several of the cuts that embellished our early numbers; his words were, "I will lend them you with pleasure; I shall be too happy to assist you in a work designed for so much good to the working builder; but I must be much more particular about the use and return of the blocks than I would under ordinary circumstances be; they and all my copyrights are pledged to my publishers, and we must be very careful in every matter concerning these blocks."

If we speak of these small matters in illustration of a great principle, we shall be borne with, as rendering the most efficient testimony to the probity of our friend.

Reverting to the published appeal, we have the whole secret of Mr. Loudon's trials in the following paragraph and the accompanying note:

"The 'Arboretum Britannicum' was got up between the years 1833 and 1838, and published on Mr. Loudon's own account, at an expense of upwards of 10,000*l.*; the greater part of this was owing at the completion of

pressing of the book trade in 1841, that only about 2,600*l.* of the debt remained to be paid off at the end of that year. It is, however, necessary to observe that this large proportion of the debt was not paid off solely by the produce of the 'Arboretum,' but in part by the profits of Mr. Loudon's other literary property, consisting of thirteen different publications, all of which stand pledged in the hands of his publishers, Messrs. Longman, for the debt on the 'Arboretum.' The debt, at the present time, amounts to about 2,400*l.*; and hence, if 350 additional subscribers could be got, the debt would be at once liquidated, the works pledged for it set free, and Mr. Loudon or his family would enjoy the whole produce of his literary property."

To add any thing of our own to this statement would be to weaken it; the most we can do is to comment on the altered circumstances under which it appears before us. His family alone remain to enjoy the property which this appeal was directed to emancipate.

It is not through the purely selfish acquisition of a copy of the "Arboretum" that we look for subscriptions to the redemption fund. Mr. Loudon's other works are all of them equally valuable. His "Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture," and the "Architectural Magazine," are sterling works, and will have their attractions in a special manner for our readers. So far the worthy deceased had purchased, or created, a fortune; the fruit of which we trust to see his relief and child speedily reap; but we can imagine no stronger case to call for the interposition of royal favour—we will not call it bounty. Distinction had been long earned by the deceased. A timely appreciation of his merits, through those to whom the recognition would be doubly grateful, is what we may confidently look for.

We have just received the following copy of an advertisement intended to accompany the last number of the *Gardener's Magazine*, which cannot fail to be interesting to our readers:—

"This will be the last number of the *Gardener's Magazine*, as its founder and conductor is no more. On the 14th of December, 1843, died at his house at Baywater, JOHN CLAUDIUS LOUDON, who for more than a quarter of a century has been before the public as a writer of numerous useful and popular works on gardening, agriculture, and architecture."

"He was born in Lanarkshire, on the 8th of April, 1783, but was soon afterwards taken to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where his father was a highly respectable farmer. Mr. Loudon was brought up as a landscape gardener, and began to practise in 1803, when he came to England with numerous letters of introduction to some of the first landed proprietors in the kingdom. He afterwards took a large farm in Oxfordshire, where he resided in 1809. In the years 1813-14-15, he made the tour of Northern Europe, visiting Sweden, Russia, and Poland. In 1819, he travelled through Italy, and in 1828 through France and Germany."

"No man, perhaps, has ever written so much under such adverse circumstances as Mr. Loudon. Many years ago, when he came first to England (in 1803), he had a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, which disabled him for two years, and ended in an ankylosed knee and a contracted left arm. In the year 1820, whilst compiling the "Encyclopædia of Gardening," he had another severe attack of rheumatism; and the following year, being recommended to go to Brighton to be shampooed in Mahomet's Baths, his right arm was there broken near the shoulder, and it never properly united. Notwithstanding this, he continued to write with his right hand till 1825,

"* It may be thought, from the well-known extensive sale of the last twenty years, of Mr. Loudon's publications, that he might need to be independent. But, in consequence of too narrow application while compiling the "Encyclopædia of Gardening," Mr. Loudon fell into debt; in 1821, which obliged him ultimately to have his right arm amputated, his left hand being at the same time so much injured, as to leave him with only the partial use of two fingers, and his left knee being ankylosed. In consequence of these bodily infirmities, Mr. Loudon has been obliged to keep an amanuensis and a corrector for the last twenty years, and also doing the greater part of that, a servant to act as valet. It is not true for the expense thus incurred, and for others arising from the same cause, Mr. Loudon might have found more independent, even without his literary property. This explanation is due to those who are ignorant of Mr. Loudon's

when the arm was broken a second time, and he was then obliged to have it amputated; but not before a general breaking up of the frame had commenced, and the thumb and two fingers of the left hand had been rendered useless. Since that time Mr. Loudon has published a number of works, the most ruinous and laborious of which is the "Arboretum Britannicum," and which has unfortunately not yet paid itself. He died at last of disease of the lungs, after suffering severely about three months."

"Never, perhaps, did any man possess more energy and determination than Mr. Loudon, whatever he began he pursued with enthusiasm, and carried out, notwithstanding obstacles that would have discouraged any other man. He was a warm friend, and most kind and affectionate to all his relations of son, husband, father, and brother; and he never hesitated to sacrifice pecuniary considerations to what he considered his duty."

HISTORICAL NOTES ON ARCHITECTURE.

THE architecture of Britain, previous to the Roman invasion, was partly Cyclopean, but we can scarcely dignify with the title of architecture the huts, dens, and caves in which our ancestors lived. Stonehenge is the principal existing monument of the Cyclopean masonry in this country. Diodorus Siculus speaks of the houses of the Britons as built of wood, the walls made of stakes and wattling like hurdles, and thatched with either reeds or straw; but when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain, the inhabitants of Cantium (Kent), and some other parts in the south, had learnt to build houses more substantial and convenient. The first step towards this improvement seems to have consisted in plastering the wattled walls with a coating of clay, and filling up the chinks; and rude as this sort of building may appear, it is still not infrequent in the north of England for outhouses and cow sheds. The houses of the Britons were generally, perhaps always, of a circular form; they were usually built in clusters of three or four, sometimes more, within a square court.

When the Romans invaded Britain, it was natural that they should engraft on the natives some of the arts of civilisation, but although the intercourse between the two countries became more free and intimate, yet the people of Britain did not make any very considerable improvements in the manner of building for at least a hundred years after that invasion. In the course of time, the Britons, who were not inensible to the advantages of civilisation, availed themselves of the knowledge of the Romans so much, that in the reign of Constantine, they built houses, temples, courts, and market-places, with every Roman accompaniment of mosaic pavement, saloons, and peristyles. The Romans not only built a prodigious number of magnificent structures for their own accommodation, but they encouraged and instructed the Britons to imitate their example; and this engrafting the arts and science of civilized life on barbarians had a most important influence on their character. The spirit of building in Britain which was introduced and encouraged by the Romans, so much increased the taste of the British builders, that in the third century this island was famous for the great number and excellence of its architects and artificers.

Architecture, and the arts generally, did not long flourish in Britain, but soon began to decline here, as well as in all the provinces of the Western Empire. This was partly owing to the building of the city of Constantinople, which attracted the most eminent architects and artificers to the East, and partly owing to the irruptions and depredations of the barbarous nations; so that the final departure of the Romans was followed by the almost total extinction of architecture in this country. The Roman art of building appears to have been lost in Britain in the year 598, nor was it revived until towards the close of the seventh century. The long succession of miseries in which the Britons were involved by the Scots, Picts, and Saxons, deprived them of many of their useful arts they had been taught by the Romans, and they retrograded rapidly in civilisation. The Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, were so ignorant of the arts as the people they had subdued; however, they constructed